

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01

AID-05 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /053 W

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O R 191024Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9232

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19775

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, TH

SUBJECT: NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY REJECTS AMENDMENT TO
ABOLISH UPPER HOUSE

REF: BANGKOK 19422

1. A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION BY ABOLISHING ALL REFERENCES TO THE UPPER HOUSE FAILED TO RECEIVE THE NECESSARY ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF THE FULL NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA) MEMBERSHIP AT ITS FIRST READING DECEMBER 19. THE PROPOSAL IS THUS DEFEATED.

2. DURING A STORMY SESSION IN WHICH MEMBERS PROPOSED AT LEAST FIVE DIFFERENT MOTIONS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION, THE NLA DECIDED TO VOTE ON DR. AMON CHANTASOMBUN'S MOTION TO ABOLISH THE SENATE. DR. AMON PROPOSED THE SENATE'S ABOLITION ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE KING OBJECTS TO IT AND THAT ITS LIMITED POWER MAKES IT USELESS. 121 MEMBERS VOTED FOR THE PROPOSAL, 54 VOTED AGAINST, AND 35 ABSTAINED. THE PROPOSAL THUS LACKED THE NECESSARY 141 VOTES NEEDED TO PASS.

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3. COMMENT: A PROMINENT THAI JURIST TOLD THE POLITICAL

COUNSELOR DECEMBER 18 THAT THE KING HAD ASKED THE GOVERNMENT ON DECEMBER 10 (CONSTITUTION DAY) WHY IT HAD NOT TAKEN ANY ACTION ON HIS RECOMMENDATION TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION. THE KING HAD MADE THE RECOMMENDATION WHEN HE PROMULGATED THE CONSTITUTION OCTOBER 7. "THE NATION" OF DECEMBER 12 REPORTED THE SAME STORY. THE SIZE OF THE VOTE IN FAVOR INDICATES THAT MANY NLA MEMBERS WANTED TO GO ALONG WITH THE KING'S WISHES, BUT A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ON THIS ISSUE WOULD HAVE OPENED THE DOOR TO MORE CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSALS - LIKE LOWERING THE VOTING AGE TO 18 - WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD EARLIER REJECTED ON THE CONTENTION THAT THE CURRENT NLA DID NOT HAVE THE POWER TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION. WE WILL REPORT ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE VOTING AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE.

KINTNER

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Message Attributes

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